REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks are respectfully requested. Claims 1, 14 and 18 are amended without prejudice or disclaimer.

Objection to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the Specification because of an informality. Applicants have corrected the specification and request withdrawal of the objection.

Rejection of Claims 1-21 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Abella et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,044,347) ("Abella et al.") in view of Young (Dialog Structure and Plan Recognition in Spontaneous Spoken Dialog, 1993) ("Young"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that one of skill in the art would not have sufficient motivation or suggestion to combine these references and furthermore, even if combined they fail to teach each limitation of the claims. Primarily, Applicants shall discuss how the Examiner has misinterpreted the limitation of the claims and therefore, has made a minor amendment to clarify the invention.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to revise the characterization of step (c) to recite "if there is a plurality of direct descendents of the current focus node that are lit", then certain steps are taken. Applicants note that the previous characterization was essentially of the same inasmuch as it recited if there is not a single direct descendent of the current focus node, then the steps are taken. While the term "not a single direct descendent" could encompass either 0 or a plurality of descendents, the steps that are taken make it clear that there are meant to be a plurality of directed descendents from the current focus node that are lit inasmuch as step 1 recites "assigning a lowest common ancestor node to all lit nodes as a new focus node."

However, the Office Action on page 3 appears to interpret step (c) as there were no direct descendents of a current focus node. In the last three lines of page 3 of the Office Action, it states "from the example illustrated, since there is no direct descendent, the user is prompted and the focus node is moved to the heading movie." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the corrected language of step (c) is not meant to introduce a limitation not previously there in order to overcome the prior art, but is provided to clarify rather than change the scope of the previous language. Applicants submit that this does not narrow the scope of the limitation of step (c).

With this clarification in mind, Applicants submit that column 9, lines 41-44 and lines 50-67 fail to teach a step of, if there is a plurality of direct descendents of a current focus node that are lit, then assigning a lowest common ancestor node to all lit nodes as a new focus node. There is no discussion or determination in Abbott et al. regarding identifying a lowest common ancestor node of all lit nodes as a new focus node when there is a plurality of direct descendents that are lit. This concept is illustrated by way of example in Figure 2c of the present application in which the plurality of lit nodes include node 230 and node 240. The lowest common ancestor node of all lit nodes is node 216, which becomes assigned as a new focus node. Applicants respectfully submit that inasmuch as the Examiner certainly misinterpreted the particular limitation of claim 1, that Applicants submit that step (c) and its sub-steps are not taught or suggested by Abbott et al. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable and in condition for allowance.

Claims 14 and 18 are amended in the same manner as claim 1 and rejected also under the same analysis. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 14 and dependent claims 15-17 and claim 18 and dependent claims 19-21 are also patentable and in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-4 each depend from claim 1 and recite further limitations therefrom and accordingly are patentable and in condition for allowance. Applicants also assert that other features in terms of using associated with step (b) are also not taught by Young et al. as is asserted in the Office Action. For example, page 4 asserts that Abella et al. "does [sic] not specifically disclose the descendents of the focus node." Applicants respectfully submit that this mischaracterizes the particular limitation of step (b) which requires a determination of whether there is a "single direct descendent of the focus node that is lit." This particular feature is taught in Figure 2b of the present specification in which the focus node is node 208 and the single direct descendent of the focus node is node 210. In this case, the lit direct descendent of the focus node is assigned as a new focus node. Applicant notes that there is no analysis taught in Young et al. regarding determining there is single direct descendent of the focus node that is lit and then taking the steps of (b)(1)-(3) if that is the case.

Claim 5 recites generalizing by attempting to select a new focus node further from a current focus node by...(see step (c)) Sub-step (2) recites assigning a lowest common ancestor node as a new focus node if there are multiple descendent nodes that are lit and step (c) does not apply. Applicants note that again, column 9, lines 41-44 and 50-67 are cited inasmuch as in the example illustrated there are multiple descendent nodes with the information Atlantic City. Applicants respectfully traverse this analysis and note that it is illogical in the context of the earlier analysis. For example, page 6 of the office Action asserts that the focus root node must be node 60 in Figure 4. In other words, the Office Action asserts that the recited focus root node in step (a) is the first prompt from the dialog that is taught in column 9, lines 41-44 and 50-67. If node 60 is the root node, then step (c)(2) which recites assigning a lowest common ancestor node as a "new focus node," if there are multiple descendent nodes that are lit in steps (c)(1) does not apply, must be a different (new) node. The multiple descendents are identified as nodes with the

information "Atlantic City". However, the only common ancestor node of both of these descendent nodes is node 60. Accordingly, node 60 cannot both be the focus root node as well as a "new" focus node at the same time. It is because of these inconsistencies that Applicants respectfully submit that the particular approach taught in claim 5 is novel and non-obvious over the teachings of Abella et al. For this reason and the other reasons set forth above, Applicants submit that claim 5 and dependent claims 6-9 are patentable and in condition for allowance. Claim 10 is patentable for the same reasons set above relative to claim 5 inasmuch as the analysis in rejecting claim 10 is identical to claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 10 and dependent claims 11-13 are patentable and in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Having addressed all rejections and objections, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner for Patents is authorized to charge or credit the **Novak, Druce & Quigg, LLP, Account No. 14-1437** for any deficiency or overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____

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